Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office for Administration and Finance
Information Technology Division

Policy Area: Application/Application Development	Policy #: ITD-APP-01
Title: Enterprise Open Standards Policy	Effective Date: January 13, 2004

Issue Statement

The Commonwealth must ensure that its investments in information technology result in systems that are sufficiently interoperable to meet the business requirements of its agencies and to effectively serve its constituencies. This policy addresses the importance of open standards compliance for IT investments in the Commonwealth. For the purpose of this policy, open standards is defined as follows:

Open Standards: Specifications for systems that are publicly available and are developed by an open community and affirmed by a standards body. Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) is an example of an open standard. Open standards imply that multiple vendors can compete directly based on the features and performance of their products. It also implies that the existing information technology solution is portable and that it can be removed and replaced with that of another vendor with minimal effort and without major interruption (see current version of the Enterprise Technical Reference Model).

Applicability

Agencies within the Executive Department and vendors providing information technology goods and services to these agencies must comply with this policy.

Commonwealth's Position

- Effective and efficient government service delivery requires system integration and data sharing.

- Technology investments must be made based on total cost of ownership and best value to the Commonwealth. Component-based software development based on open standards allows for a more cost-effective "build once, use many times" approach.

- Open systems and specifications are often less costly to acquire, develop and maintain and do not result in vendor lock-in.

Policy Statement

- All prospective IT investments will comply with open standards referenced in the current version of the Enterprise Technology Reference Model.

- Existing IT systems will be reviewed for open standards compatibility and will be enhanced to achieve open standards compatibility where appropriate. Open standards solutions will be selected when existing systems are to be retired or need major enhancements.

Roles and Responsibilities

Information Technology Division

- Provide guidance and consultation to agencies on open standards compliance.

- Provide central services and infrastructure that comply with open standards.

Agencies

- Ensure compliance with this policy for all prospective IT investments including vendor oversight.

- Ensure all application development efforts build in reviews throughout the process to ensure enterprise architecture compliance (including open standards compliance).

- Review current systems for open standards compatibility and bring these systems into compliance when major enhancements are scheduled or when these systems are replaced.

- Contribute to the development of enterprise architecture and standards.

Compliance

- ITD will review all agency IT Investment Briefs, project plans and service requests for compliance with this policy before granting approvals.

- Agencies will integrate open standards compliance language in all IT bids and solicitations.

Related Documents

- Enterprise Information Technology Acquisition Policy

- Enterprise Technical Reference Model Version 1.0

Points of Contact

Questions or comments related to this policy should be directed to Standards@state.ma.us. The Director of Policy and Architecture, Information Technology Division will respond to all questions.